

ASSESSING THE ESSENCE OF GATEWAY

by Ilene Hirsch

What's so special about the GATEWAY VOYAGE® residential program? This "participant's-eye-view" unerringly picks out the components that make the VOYAGE so much more than the sum of its parts.

Dear Helen,

Thank you so much for the postcard following up on my *GATEWAY VOYAGE* of this past August. I wanted to get back to you sooner, but I've been so busy with so many good opportunities that have come my way since *GATEWAY*. I did want to let you know my thoughts on the program and how my life has changed since then. First of all, before coming to *GATEWAY*, I had done Waves I through III of the *GATEWAY EXPERIENCE*® tapes at home. I enjoyed doing the home tapes and received some benefits from them. However, I always knew that I'd take the leap and do a *GATEWAY* at TMI someday. This year, [1994] NJ and I finally made the commitment and are ever so glad that we did!

The *GATEWAY* program at TMI is nothing like doing the home tapes. It is a uniquely growing experience all by itself. Though the home tapes are beneficial for quieting the mind and relaxing, they cannot compare to the intensity and personal growth of going through the *GATEWAY VOYAGE* at TMI. After much thought and careful reflection, I have broken down *GATEWAY* into five components. These components are powerful by themselves and contribute to the total experience. In addition, their synergy is really what makes *GATEWAY* so special. No one component is more important than the others, nor can they really be separated. They are as follows.

1. The Setting. Being in the Blue Ridge Mountains among the beauty, peacefulness, harmony, and quiet was incredible. Not only were we in this grand environment with nature's sounds all around us, but being isolated from the rest of the world helped me focus on myself and not the "out there." The lush greenness was especially healing. There was also the architectural beauty of the Center itself, making me feel like I was home. The design of the CHEC units was perfectly thought out and nothing I have at home could reproduce that environment.
2. Being Taken Care Of. I have never felt so inconspicuously taken care of in my life! It was wonderful! Every little detail was handled, and the program was so well organized, it ran without a glitch. There was never a worry about what we were doing next or where we had to be—everything from meals to when to go to the bathroom. Not only did this help me to

focus on why I was at TMI, but it was very nurturing. I also feel that TMI didn't skimp on anything.

3. The Group. I am so grateful to have experienced this part of the program. In some ways, it was the hardest part of the program, and it was also the most rewarding and moving. I've never been with a group of people before who have changed so much in six days, who I've learned so many lessons from, and who I've learned to love so much. All that group energy coming together increased the energy exponentially, making it that much easier to go to different levels of consciousness.
4. The Transcendence. This was so transforming and so personal for me. I experienced things that I never came close to experiencing in doing the home tapes. Messages came to me easily and clearly. The expansion of my consciousness showed such a different and bigger perception of life, death, and reality, that it's a perception I hope to keep with me always.
5. The Trainers. Our trainers were John Cahill and Ann Martin. They were the glue and the catalysts of the group at the same time. In the nuts-and-bolts scheme of things, they kept everything on schedule, taking care of the many details involved in moving twenty-four people to where they needed to be. I'm speaking in the physical world, of course. On other levels, they were subtle and effective guides into ourselves and other worlds. And when some group members went through emotional crises, Ann and John really showed their skills in gently guiding the person through the crisis and to a better place. It was always comforting knowing they were there. Not only did they help deepen the whole experience of *GATEWAY*, they showed us how to have a lot of fun doing it.

All five components build on each other and interconnect like a spider's web. Break one strand and the whole web is weaker. But together, you've got one helluva design.

As for my life after *GATEWAY*, it's changed in many ways. I am a much happier person, much more at peace with myself, and have a different perspective on everything. Both NJ and I continue to use the tapes and skills we have learned to go to the different Focuses. I continue to use the tools of problem solving and one-month patterning, as well as many of the other exercises.

The Institute is a magical place. I love that TMI keeps a low profile because I always want it to be accessible and unspoiled. I also believe that whoever is meant to discover TMI will find it. Thank you for helping to make my experience at TMI such a special one. I will be back!

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